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Housekeepers' Chat

JAN 23 1928

Mon., Jan. 23/28

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "How to Select Meat (Beef Cuts)." Information about meats from Miss Lucy M. Alexander, Assistant Specialist in Foods, Bureau of Home Economics, Menu, and three recipes, from Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: Leaflet No. 17, "Cooking Beef, According to the Cut."

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The other day I called up a friend of mine, who has been doing experimental work in meat cookery.

"Good morning, Miss Alexander," I said in my most pleasant manner. "Have you anything special to do this week?"

"Anything special," she groaned. "Aunt Sammy, during the past two years I have had charge of roasting 600 legs of lamb, and 300 pieces of beef. Tomorrow, I begin roasting 100 more legs of lamb. And you ask me whether I have anything special to do. That is too much, Aunt Sammy!"

"Forgive me," I said. "It's such a nice day, I thought you'd like to go to market, and help me select some meat for a company dinner."

"What kind of meat are you serving?" asked Miss Alexander. "Beef, veal, lamb, or pork?"

"Roast beef, medium," I said. "Roast beef, because everybody likes it, and besides, this is just the season when beef is at its best, following the summer and fall feeding."

"That's so," said my friend. "What cut of beef are you going to select, Aunt Sammy?"

"A rib roast, because that's a general favorite."

"Quite true," said Miss Alexander. "And the best roast is taken from the prime rib cut, which consists of seven ribs. The ribs which do not show the shoulder blade are the choicest. Select a piece of beef with a reasonable amount of fat. That will help the flavor of your roast, and you can use the drippings to fry potatoes in. Get a piece of meat from a young animal, rather than from an old one. Beef from a young animal shows blood in the bones, and cartilage buttons on the spinal processes. In meat from an old animal, the bones are bloodless, and the cartilage has become bone. Better get a two or three-rib roast. There are lots of ways to use any of the left-over meat. And be sure to-- Oh well, Aunt Sammy, I guess I might as well come down and go shopping with you."

Sure enough, in 30 minutes, Miss Alexander met me at the market, and to-

gether we selected a beef roast, for my company dinner. I wish you could have gone with us, on our tour of the meat market, but since you couldn't, I am going to tell you what Miss Alexander said about selecting a roast of beef.

"In the first place," said she, "when the homemaker goes to market, to buy a piece of beef, she should think of two things: She wants a cut that will fill the desired place in the menu, and at the same time be consistent with the contents of her pocketbook. If she knows something about the different cuts, and how to cook them, in order to bring out their best qualities, she can select and serve appetizing meats, to suit any family budget.

"Now of course you know that different cuts of beef, from the same animal, vary greatly in tenderness. I want you to write down, in your notebook, the Tender Cuts of Beef, and the Less Tender Cuts of Beef. First, the Tender Cuts. Under the Tender Cuts, we have the Steaks -- sirloin, porterhouse, tenderloin, club, and rib (short cut), and the Roasts, -- rib and loin.

"Shall I tell you the best way to cook these Tender Cuts of Beef? Write these directions, if you like: First, sear the meat, at a high temperature, for a short time, until a brown coating is formed. Then reduce the temperature, and continue the cooking. Do not cover the meat, and do not add water. If meat is cooked in this way the juices are held in, and the meat keeps most of its flavor. The drippings usually have enough flavor to form the basis of gravy. Tender cuts are cooked until rare, medium, or well done, according to personal preference. A meat thermometer removes the guesswork in roasting. Beef is rare between the temperatures of 130° and 150° F., medium between 150° and 170° F., and well done at about 180°F.

"Now we shall discuss the less tender, and less expensive cuts, which can be made into attractive and delicious dishes, when they are cooked properly. The less tender cuts include such pieces as the chuck, shoulder, flank, round, rump, and neck. In cooking these cuts, we want to make the tough meat tender. Heat, moisture, and slow cooking, help to do that. First, we sear the meat, usually in fat, until it is browned. After the meat is browned, we reduce the cooking temperature, add a small quantity of water, and then cover the meat, tightly. Cook slowly, until the meat is tender. The small quantity of water which is added in cooking, extracts some of the flavor from the meat, and makes good gravy."

Some day I'll tell you more about my trip to market with Miss Alexander. Get your pencils now, please, for the company dinner menu, and three recipes. A good many recipes for one day, but they are easy.

The menu for any company dinner included a Rib Roast of Beef; Yorkshire Pudding; Buttered String Beans; Creamed Onions, Grape Jelly; Jellied Prunes; and Plain Cookies. Doesn't that sound entrancing? Just the word. Attention, please, while I broadcast directions for cooking a Rib Roast of Beef. Everybody ready? Let's go:

Select a two or three rib standing roast. Wipe it off with a damp cloth, sprinkle with salt, and then lightly with flour. Place the roast in an open pan without water and with the fat side of the roast up. As the fat melts and cooks out it will baste the meat. Through the fat covering, insert a meat thermometer, so that the bulb reaches the center of the roast. Place the meat

in a hot oven: (500° to 525° Fahrenheit.) Sear the meat for 20 to 30 minutes, until lightly browned, then reduce the temperature to about 350° Fahrenheit and continue the cooking until the thermometer in the meat reads about 140° Fahrenheit for a rare roast, 160° Fahrenheit for a medium roast, or 180° Fahrenheit for a well-done roast. A three-rib roast will probably require 15 minutes to the pound to be rare, 18 minutes to the pound to be medium, and 20 to 22 minutes to the pound to be well done. Serve the meat on a hot platter, surrounded by browned potatoes or by squares of Yorkshire pudding.

Would you like to have the recipe for Yorkshire pudding? It's a great favorite, with Roast Beef. Five ingredients, for Yorkshire pudding.

1 cup milk	2 eggs, and
1/2 cup flour	4 tablespoons beef drippings
1/2 teaspoon salt	

Only five ingredients, as I have before stated: (Repeat)

Sift the flour and the salt, add the milk, and beat until smooth. Add the eggs, and beat with a Dover egg beater, for five minutes. Put the beef drippings into pans with high sides, and when hot, pour in the batter, about one-half inch thick. Bake in a hot oven, for fifteen to twenty minutes. Cut in squares, and serve at once with the roast.

The third recipe is for Jellied Prunes, a dessert so good that you will want to make it two or three times, in succession. Seven ingredients, for Jellied Prunes.

1/2 pound prunes	1 cup sugar
2 cups boiling water	1/8 teaspoon salt, and
2 tablespoons gelatin	1/4 cup lemon juice
1/2 cup cold water	

I'll repeat the seven ingredients, for Jellied Prunes: (Repeat)

Select plump prunes. Wash well, and soak overnight in water to cover. Simmer until tender in the same water. Remove the stones and chop or cut the fruit very fine. Soak the gelatin in the cold water. Add the boiling water, and stir until the gelatin is dissolved. Add the sugar, lemon juice, salt, and prunes. Stir until well blended. Chill, stirring occasionally until the fruit is well mixed. When set, serve with whipped cream. The pulp of one orange may be added if desired.

To repeat the menu: Rib Roast of Beef; Yorkshire Pudding; Buttered String Beans; Creamed Onions; Grape Jelly; Jellied Prunes; and Plain Cookies.

Now-- here's the good news I have saved until the last. Miss Alexander, whom I mentioned a few minutes ago, and the Recipe Lady, who tests all the recipes for the Bureau of Home Economics, have just published a four-page leaflet called Cooking Beef. Only four pages, but in these four pages you will find more practical and usable information about cooking beef, than I've ever seen before, in four pages. This leaflet contains four recipes --Broiled Steak, Rib Roast of Beef, Stuffed Flank Steak, and Pot Roast of Beef. My advice is to send for this leaflet, and paste it in your radio Cookbooks. The leaflet is free, and so are the Radio Cookbooks, as long as the supply lasts.

